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HOW  
TO  
DRESS  
*POULTRY*





# How to Dress Poultry

by  
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# Introduction

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There are two sides to Poultry Culture—one—the show room, the other, the table.

It is impossible to tell which is the most important, and a man in the business should be well informed upon the preparation of the fowl for both if he desires to realize the greatest financial success.

Every month the Poultry Journals are teeming with articles upon “How to Raise Poultry,” “Birds for the Show Room,” and “How to Make Hens Lay,” but few ever go so far as to tell “How to Dress Poultry.”

This is a mistake, and we, therefore, endeavor to furnish this much needed information in as few words as possible through this little booklet.

For every bird that takes a prize there are 10,000 only valuable as market stock, and as the average man goes into the business to make money, and does not even expect to show his birds he should be given instructions which will prepare

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him for meeting the market's demands and enable him to conquer the proposition of satisfactory sale, by sending stock so nicely handled that there will be a constant call for Poultry dressed by him.

An expert dresser can cover "a multitude of sins" by the proper handling of the fowl, and while careful breeding, feeding and fattening are so essential they become imperative, the finishing touch,—the killing and dressing,—is no less a factor by comparison.

I can sight, for example, the fact that the writer once bought some 240 live turkeys just arrived from the South, red from being over-heated and thin from under-feeding, at an average price of 11 cents per pound and, after dressing, sold them, with the exception of two barrels, for 18 cents per pound, while other stock which was standing beside it and had been carefully fattened for months sold for 15 cents.

That difference meant considerable in profit and was only obtainable because the birds had been treated with the greatest care.

## How to Feed.

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It is not our intention to tell what are the best feeds for fattening purposes, but to instruct upon the last one just before killing.

The aim is to have plenty in the fowl, but none in crop; to give added weight to the bird, yet to prevent the feed from showing.

A buyer never likes to think he is paying poultry prices for grain, and, therefore, a full crop not only hurts the appearance of the bird, but materially reduces its market value as well.

A first-class ration for the last feeding is:—cracked corn or coarse corn meal, mixed with clean sand, and the whole moistened sufficiently to hold the combination together. The sand will assure quick digestion and increased weight, and, 12 hours after eating, a healthy fowl should not show a sign of this feed.

Another extreme which should be as carefully guarded against as overfeeding

is—do not allow the fowl to become gaunt and starved for want of food. 12 hours before killing, every bird should have all it will eat, but no water to drink. In fact, a fowl should have very little to drink within 18 hours of the time of dressing. The food will remain much longer in the body if not flooded.

There is one more caution which must be remembered—if you are forced to catch and coop the birds the night before killing, *do not crowd them*. Give them plenty of room to rest comfortably, and permit the air to circulate about them freely. Otherwise, they will become overheated—almost steamed—and when dressed will have a red cast which is both detrimental to their appearance and their sale.

Give the birds plenty of room and air—plenty of quickly-digesting food 12 hours before killing—no water to drink within that time, and, when they come from the dresser's hands, if he has studied the following instructions, they will be ideal in appearance and command the highest market price.





### STICKING THE FOWL.

Notice the position of the left hand, and how knife is held—also how closely the feathers lie against the body.



# Dressing Turkeys and Chickens

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To begin at the beginning—we will assume that you have a plump Chicken or Turkey ready for the knife, and, as it will be better to make it a little more explicit we will say Chicken (Springer or Fowl),—for all are handled in much the same manner.

Attach a stout cord, with the noose at the loose end, to a beam in such a position that the bird, in struggling will not be able to strike itself against any obstacle—then hold its feet together—thrust them through the loop—see that they are held securely, and that the head of the bird is about opposite the waist line, or a little below.

Now take hold of the wings and lock them—this can be done by bringing one



### STRIKING THE BRAIN.

Position of hands is much the same as when sticking. Notice how loose the feathers appear. This is a first-class "stick." The photo shows how wings are locked and kept out of the way

over the other and catching the tip of the upper wing under that of the lower. This will make it impossible for the bird to extricate itself and will allow the dresser free use of both hands.

Then in the left hand grasp the head firmly and force the bill open by the use of the thumb and middle finger. After you have a secure hold, thrust the blade down the throat just behind the head and draw it across, with the point slipping along the neck—or back-bone.

This will sever the jugular vein and insure a good “stick.” Now withdraw the knife and allow the bird to bleed for a few moments, then place the point of the knife against the roof of the mouth with the cutting edge toward the left hand and force it through the membrane into the brain cavity,—turn it three quarters of the way round, twisting the wrist in the natural way, and then draw the blade directly



#### FIFTEEN SECONDS AFTER.

Notice how dresser has removed all the large feathers from the most sensitive parts of the fowl in this short time. Speed counts here, and is all-important. Bird is steadied by holding wings in left hand.

across the base of the brain, thus severing the spinal cord and thereby destroying the control which, in life, the bird has over its feathers.

With a few trials this method will become quite easy and you will find the feathers almost ready to drop off.

As soon as the brain has been pierced, the dresser should turn the knife into the skin of the lower bill and make a hole through which a hook suspending a weight of some kind should be hung (a horse shoe, attached to a piece of strong wire, is excellent),—this keeps the neck extended and assures of a thorough bleeding, which is all important.

After this operation quickly rub the hand down the neck, removing the feathers therefrom, then pull the tail and wing feathers by a quick, firm twist and begin to remove those from the tenderest parts of the body, which on the Chicken are the





#### HOW TO SCALD.

Do not misconstrue this photo. Chickens, unless feathers "set" too quickly, should NEVER be dipped. This is merely to show how a Duck or Goose should be held to prevent the injuring of their appearance by cooking the head and legs.

breast, and back near the base of the tail, and on the Turkey the breast and thigh.

Never use the finger nails to pick promiscuously—the side of the fore-finger and end of the thumb are far quicker and will not scratch. When pulling the short, or pin feathers, the nails will have to come into play, but great care should be used that only a careful, clean pluck is made—not a scratch or scrape.

By the time the body is finished the bird will be so nearly dead that flapping will be almost impossible, so the wings can be unlocked and picked clean.

It is not necessary to remove the point feathers. Nearly every house-wife values the Turkey's for brushes and does not mind paying for the slight additional weight, while the Chicken's may be cut off at the outer joint and not affect the sale of the bird in the least,—thus saving considerable time and disagreeable work.



## Dressing Ducks and Geese.

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The same directions given for killing Chickens and Turkeys can be followed when dressing Ducks and Geese, or rather that part pertaining to the removal of the larger feathers.

Ducks and Geese, stuck by the method herein shown, will lose control of their feathers as quickly and as well as will a Fowl, and can be almost as easily roughed. (Roughing means the removing of the coarser feathers).

However, after all these have been plucked, the birds should be dipped in hot water for a few moments and then wrapped in a towel or clean bag to steam—after which the remaining feathers can be easily rubbed off.

By drypicking a Duck or Goose the feathers are in a much better condition for drying and will last longer than ones par-boiled by the old-fashioned, needless scalding methods, while the birds will retain their bright, clean appearance much longer than usual.

## Scalding.

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There is one maxim which must, at all times, be regarded when poultry is being dressed for market and that is,—NEVER SCALD Chickens or Turkeys, nor Ducks and Geese before they have been roughed.

When exposed to the air a scalded fowl shows every scratch upon it and soon looks stale and unattractive. Scalding takes from the selling value at least two cents per pound and is absolutely unnecessary.

Remember,—There is nothing to be gained by scalding—for a fowl stuck according to the methods herein explained can be dressed much quicker than one dipped in hot water—the hands will not be softened and cracked by the changes of heat and cold nor will you be forced to accept a considerable reduction in the prices realized.

But there are times—especially before you become master of these instructions, that the bird's brain will not be pierced properly or you will be a moment too slow

in beginning to pick, at which times the feathers will "set" and the only alternative will be the dipping pot.

When this is found necessary melt a little rosin in the water, and hold the birds in only long enough for the water to penetrate through the feathers into the flesh. This should also be done when you desire to remove the small feathers of Ducks and Geese.

Never allow the head or legs to be touched by the water, for it takes all the color out of the former and leaves the latter raw and anything but attractive. Catch the bird by the head and legs—dip it in the water two or three times,—then pick quickly and do not rub any more than absolutely necessary.

Use these birds for home consumption or pack them in a box by themselves so they may be sold separately and thereby not affect the sale of the dry picked ones.

The rosin in the water toughens the outer skin and assists it in withstanding the rubbing it necessarily receives.

## Cooling.

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Now we come to a VERY important part of poultry handling—the proper method of cooling.

Many persons believe the best thing for them to do is to ship the birds as soon after being killed as possible—while, in fact, nothing can be more hurtful to their sale.

After a Turkey has been dressed it should be removed to a cool place where it can hang for at least ten to twelve hours. It should never be dipped in water or be allowed to touch anything else while the animal heat is leaving the body.

Chickens, Ducks and Geese should be immersed in a tub of water as soon as all the feathers have been removed and allowed to remain therein for an hour or two—this will plump them, and in the

case of the Chicken, will make it look bright and clean by removing the scruff.

After they have remained in the water some time they should be hung up in the same manner as the Turkey, where they can drain and cool thoroughly, which will require from six to ten hours.

#### **POINTS TO BE REMEMBERED.**

Never plump a Turkey.

Always plump a Chicken, Duck or Goose.

Allow them to hang until every muscle is rigidly set.

Never allow them to touch each other or anything which will prevent the free action of the air around them.

Never pack as long as one drop of water or one degree of animal heat remains in their bodies.

## Packing.

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When the birds have become thoroughly cooled—give all your attention to the packing. Attractive appearance is half the battle when the time comes to sell and the cases, or barrels, must be packed carefully, if you wish to insure safe transportation.

There is one thing which must be guarded against and that is—straw or hay must NEVER be placed between the birds.

A fat man once said, after he had slept upon a spring bed instead of a mattress, that,—“ It had designs on him which were worse than useless,—they were downright hurtful ” So it is with poultry—every straw cuts into the fat and, when removed from the barrel, their appearance is hurt and therefore their value. For poultry is sold upon appearances, always.

The best way is to spread a bunch of straw or hay upon the bottom of the box or barrel—over this a layer of strong paper, then start to pack. Fill every available space, protecting the tender skin wherever possible and when the package is full spread another sheet of paper over the top of the poultry and some straw between it and the lid.

See that the package is strong—well packed and securely closed and you need have no fear of the way the stock will carry.

A barrel is generally preferable if you can fill it full, for it is easier to pack and contains much less waste space than a box, and is, also, much easier to handle.

In warm weather always ship by express—In cold—the freights may be used providing you allow plenty of time for delivery when you are desirous of reaching the city in time for a certain market.



## **Shipping.**

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The foregoing directions have been written with the intention of giving explicit information in as few words as possible, the desire having been to make them clear and not so complicated that they will confuse.

Some markets can sell birds only when drawn and head and feet removed, while others call for them entact. As you know the demands of your market, and as these specifications do not change the method of dressing in the least, this point is unnecessary in a treatise upon the proper killing of the poultry.

Do not expect to master the art in a day. It requires weeks to become really proficient, but you will soon notice an increase in speed and an improvement in the appearance of the dressed birds if you follow as closely as possible the lines laid down.

One chapter is no less important than the other, though that upon Killing and Dressing is valuable. No less so are the ones on Cooling and Packing. They all tend toward increasing the attractive appearance of the bird, and, therefore, should not be slighted.

Remember, 50 per cent. of the selling points of a package of poultry is its appearance, and that a thin bird properly dressed will bring more money than a fat one poorly handled.

There is one point, however, which has not been touched upon, and that is, WHEN TO SHIP.

If you have any large, fat fowls—Chickens—which you wish to dispose of, they should be shipped alive in the fore part of September.

The New Year of the Jews begins the early part of that month, and, as they buy only live birds and desire to use the fat

for cooking, they will pay more for them alive than you can get for the same ones dressed at that or any other time. Live Geese and Ducks also sell well at this time, for their fat is much in demand.

After this holiday the next is Thanksgiving. This market demands small birds. Chickens, Ducks and Geese are in good demand, while Turkeys are wanted, if not too large. Save your Toms for Christmas, and kill your fat Hens and young birds—in fact, anything that weighs less than 18 pounds. Then comes Christmas. This is the Turkey market—nothing can be too large. If you possibly can, get your old Toms and large birds fat for this market. All kinds of good poultry are wanted, and, while there are times when poor stock is a drug upon the market, the time was never known when fat, nicely handled birds would not sell readily and bring fair prices.

After Christmas small Turkeys will sell well. There is scarcely a time in the year when Ducks and Chickens are not in demand, and Geese will sell to a good advantage all through the winter, if fat and not too large.

If you will do your part and select a thoroughly reliable firm to handle your goods, you may rely upon their doing all they can to give satisfactory returns—good birds are too scarce and careful shippers too few to run the risk of losing the sale of the former and the patronage of the latter by any high-handed robbery.

The man who sells is often blamed by the one who deserves the censure, and the profit which should be realized by the grower and the reasonable one which the seller deserves is materially decreased by carelessness much oftener than by dishonesty.

We Recommend

## The IDEAL



## Poultry Knife

to our readers, because, to our knowledge, it is the first practical knife for the purpose ever placed upon the market.

To insure a positive and effective "stick" the handle must be large enough to allow a firm grip without causing a strain upon the wrist and arm; the blade must be strong, rigid, made of the best hand-forged steel, able to withstand hard usage, and to hold an edge indefinitely.

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